February 2015

STORY COUNTY, IOWA

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Story County Board of Supervisors

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HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

In January 2014, the Story County Board of Supervisors adopted the first *Communications Plan* aimed at the following goals:

- Transparency in County Government and accessibility through duration of projects or issues.
- Share the Story County vision with the general public and decision-makers.
- Improve communications between the Board and our constituents.
- Ensure the public and County employees have factual information.
- Provide emergency response communication.

The Plan contains the following elements:
> *Goals*
> *Target Audience*
> *Strategies*
> *Action Steps*

The Board of Supervisors amended the approved Communications Plan in May 2014.

In February 2015, the Board reviewed and updated the Communications Plan for successful implementation for calendar year 2015.

GOALS

TRANSPARENCY IN COUNTY GOVERNMENT AND ACCESSIBILITY THROUGH DURATION OF PROJECTS OR ISSUES.

- Story County will continue to strive to purposely engage community members and organizations both through traditional and new methods of engagement and participation.
- Goal should be increased citizen participation and trust in local government and an awareness of issues.

SHARE THE STORY COUNTY VISION WITH THE GENERAL PUBLIC AND DECISION-MAKERS.

- The realty of county government in Iowa is that it is a somewhat decentralized operation, serving diverse needs or our residents, while facing the fiscal realities of budgeting and other economic constraints. Our communication strategies must be designed with this in mind.

IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AND OUR CONSTITUENTS.

- Engage strategies that promote two-way dialogue between citizens and government.

ENSURE THE PUBLIC AND COUNTY EMPLOYEES HAVE FACTUAL INFORMATION.

- We generate information for residents, community organizations, businesses, other governmental organizations and/or media that serve these groups. This represents a diverse group of people with varying needs and interests in the services of county government.

PROVIDE EMERGENCY RESPONSE COMMUNICATION.

- Story County excels in communicating in emergency response and related issues. Story County will continue to plan for enhancing communication strategies in this area, identifying all appropriate solutions to reach necessary populations for all types of incidents.

TARGET AUDIENCES

Not only are the Story County's communication strategies targeted towards those already "in the know" about what is happening in Story County – the targeted audiences are far greater! Story County identifies five **Target Audiences** (described below) towards whom strategies are directed as further outlined in this Plan, including:

County Employees   -   Public Officials   -   General Public   -   Media   -   Other

COUNTY EMPLOYEES

Story County employees work in various locations and buildings throughout Story County.   Within the Story County government framework, there are six elected offices – Board of Supervisors, Auditor, Recorder, Treasurer, Sheriff and Attorney, and over twenty different County departments or program areas in this structure. Communication amongst County staff at all levels ensures the vision for Story County is presented in a consistent manner.

PUBLIC OFFICIALS

There are over 500 "public officials" in Story County – whether it be a local council member in one of our smaller communities, township trustee, volunteer first responder, member of the local Planning and Zoning Commission, or one of over 200 individuals appointed by the Board of Supervisors to serve on a board or commission. These individuals rely on Story County for information and support services.

GENERAL PUBLIC

According to the 2010 *US Census*, there are 89,542 residents in Story County. Of that, 17.8% of those people are under the age of 18, and 10% are over the age of 65. In addition, 95.1% of those people (age 25+) are high school graduates, and 45.4% (age 25+) hold at least a Bachelor's Degree. Our population continues to grow and the demographic dynamics dictate that we explore new communication strategies to continue to engage and encourage participation.

MEDIA

As media continues to shift how news and information is delivered, we need to continue to use outlets to cooperate with them in getting out our messages, news, and happenings.   Media is much for than the local newspaper, radio and television.   It now includes blogs and other online resources and social media such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and many others.

OTHER

Messages and information Story County shares must go beyond our perceived County boundaries. With I-35 and US Hwy 30 bisecting in our County, along with ISU and many other attractions, we have to employ methods that reach our visitors. Not only those already here – but also those thinking about coming. What kind of information do they need to reach all their decisions? Are our communications strategies designed so that their questions are answered or can be asked in a manner to which Story County can respond efficiently and quickly? Also, we need to be cognizant of that workforce that does not live here in Story County but spends the vast majority of their day light hours here – nearly 20% of our workforce is from out of Story County.   According to 2010 *Census* figures, there were 45,010 individuals working in Story County and 81.5% of those people live in Story County.

STRATEGIES

Strategies	County Employees	Public Officials	General Public	Media	Other
1. Newsletter (e-Newsletter)	X	X	X	X	X
2. Public Information Training	X	X			
3. Video Productions	X	X	X	X	X
4. Speakers Bureau	X	X	X	X	X
5. Continue "State of County"	X	X	X	X	X
6. Get to Know Story County Segments	X	X	X	X	X
7. Quadrant Community Meetings	X	X	X	X	X
8. Poster, Printed Media and Signage Campaign	X	X	X	X	X
9. Website Review	X	X	X	X	X
10. National County Government Month	X	X	X	X	X
11. Intranet Development and Deployment	X				
12. United Way Day of Caring	X		X		
13. Tradeshow Toolkit	X		X	X	X
14. Updated County Services Sheet	X	X	X	X	X
15. Leadership Nevada	X	X	X		X
16. Box City Festival		X	X	X	X

ACTION STEPS

Strategy	Target Audience	Comments	Timeframe
1. Newsletter (e-Newsletter)			
• *County News*	County Employees	Distributed monthly via email to County employees along with paper copies sent to departments for distribution to those without email access.	Monthly
• *Happenings*	County Employees	Distributed weekly on Wednesdays to County employees with BOS updates.	Weekly
• *Our Story*	County Employees Public Officials General Public Media Other	✓ Distributed quarterly via email ✓ Published online ✓ Paper copies sent to libraries and city halls	Quarterly January April July October
2. Public Information Training			
• *Brown Bag Luncheon Series*	County Employees Public Employees	Scheduled learning and training opportunities for County staff.	Quarterly – beginning in May 2015
3. Video Productions			
• *This is Story County* • *Department/Office Specific*	County Employees Public Officials General Public Media Other	Two separate videos, with the first one general regarding Story County (government) with production completed in-house. Second, video(s) specific to departments/offices/special projects.	January – March 2015 April – August 2015
4. Speaker's Bureau			
• *Schedule presentations*	County Employees Public Officials General Public Media Other	Develop presentations on County issues and initiatives that can be presented by County staff to interested groups and organizations.	Ongoing throughout 2015

5. Continue "State of the County"			
• *League of Women Voters* • *Publication in "County News" and "Our Story" and online.* • *Audio recording*	County Employees Public Officials General Public Media Other	Formally release the annual "State of the County" address.	January – February 2015
6. Get to Know Story County Segments			
• *Quarterly segments with County officials discussing activities or hot topics at the County level.*	County Employees Public Officials General Public Media Other	February – Mental Health May – Animal Shelter August – Treasurer's Office November – Veteran's Affairs	Ongoing throughout 2015
7. Quadrant Community Meetings			
• *Northeast Story County* • *Southeast Story County* • *Southwest Story County* • *Northwest Story County*	County Employees Public Officials General Public Media Other	Dividing Story County into four sections based on the township boundaries, the Board of Supervisors will meet with representatives from cities, school districts, townships and other identified groups, in a community located in the quadrant.	February and March 2015 would be late morning sessions. September and October 2015 are evening sessions
8. Poster, Printed Media and Signage Campaign			
• *Identify programs to include in strategy.* • *Design media, print and distribute as dictated by program.*	County Employees Public Officials General Public Media Other	There are several programs and initiatives in Story County that our residents do not necessarily realize are funded or provided (whether partially or in full) by Story County. This campaign will employ methods to help build such awareness and participation in various programs as applicable.	February - April 2015

9. **Website Review and Refresh**			
• *Complete a review of website for areas to address* • *Identify necessary updates*	County Employees Public Officials General Public Media Other	Four years after the new website was created, it is appropriate timing to complete a comprehensive review and identify areas to update.	February – November 2015
10. **National County Government Month**			
• *Proclamation by the Board of Supervisors* • *Social Media – County Fact of the Day* • *Fact Sheets released* • *NACo Celebration Posters in all buildings* • *Open houses and tours* • *County Day of Recognition for National Service is 4/7/2015* • *Counties Work Online game*	County Employees Public Officials General Public Media Other	2015 theme is: America's Counties Moving Forward: The Keys are Transportation and Infrastructure. NACo publishes the 2015 Booklet that will serve as a resource.	February – April 2015
11. **Intranet Development and Deployment**			
• *Evaluation of needs and goals – determine where solutions are needed to solve everyday problems and needs* • *Define structure and branding* • *Determine products – Civic Plus or another solution* • *Scope out launch and train*	County Employees	Putting in place a solution that helps Story County employees by increasing efficiencies, improving communications and managing information, policies and practices and knowledge retention.	March – December 2015
12. **United Way Day of Caring**			
• *Employee participation survey* • *Business Day of Caring form submitted July*	County Employees General Public Media	The United Way Day of Caring is an annual event held the first Friday of September following the LIVE UNITED campaign kick-off.	May 2015 July 2015 September 2015
13. **Tradeshow Toolkit**			
• *Scope out purpose, use, and design/structures* • *Compile schedule and request forms*	County Employees General Public Media Other	Toolkit with graphics, posters (interchangeable), banners, tablecloths, marketing materials, and other items as identified to be used at promotional events and venues.	March – August 2015

14. Update County Services Sheet			
	County Employees Public Officials General Public Media Other	Update and republish listing of the various County services and programs.	July 2015
15. Leadership Nevada			
	Public Officials General Public Other	Leadership Nevada is an issues and skills-based leadership development program. The program is open to any person who lives and/or works in Nevada and who has an interest in Nevada's future. The County is a member of the Steering Committee and conducts the County Government session.	August – November 2015
16. Box City Festival			
	Public Officials General Public Media Other	Box City is an interactive method for teaching and involving children in the city planning and urban design processes. Students "build a community" by selecting projects, applying for permits, selecting a site, and getting approval for their project.	March – May 2015